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Roman Catholic Church asserts it possesses, the universal consent of the Fathers.

I then put the simple question—produce now plain statements which show that the Fathers did really interpret this text as conveying infallibility and jurisdiction to St. Peter. Give me nothing else than proof of what you assert—that they really did concur in your interpretation.

I should suppose I was here only putting the question just in the very way in which a Roman Catholic, if this claim be true, would wish me to put it. It is clearly the most direct way of testing a valid proof.

I need scarcely say no advocate of that Church has ever stood this test. Their whole argument here is the common sophism of *ignoratio elenchi*. They produce extracts which prove not this fact, but something else which they hope may be mistaken for it. On the other side, the Protestant controversialist need only, because of the claim made to *universality* of consent by his opponents—a claim which, be it well remembered, they are *forced to make*—produce a single accredited writer who interprets the passage in a *different* sense. Your readers can judge whether the quotations made from the Fathers were relevant or not. To assume infallibility when called on to prove it is, a *petitio principii*. The argument from the Fathers is, as used by Romish writers, an *ignoratio elenchi*. These are the two great sophisms of the Roman Catholic Church in its attempted proof of the cardinal doctrine of infallibility.

On the other side, when, as the only chance left, private judgment is used as an interpreter, the Protestant controversialist is enabled to urge an unanswerable *argumentum ad hominem*.

My opponents, as other advocates of their Church, endeavoured to escape from this difficulty by asserting, that upon the Protestant principle of interpretation their claim could be made out. To this I replied, as any one would, such mode of proof is not, upon your own principles, open to you; you contradict them in using it. You have, however, really no option in the matter, and *must, at last*, whether you like it or not, come to that mode of proof, though, in doing so, you prove both your own inconsistency and the truth of the Protestant principle, which you affect to decry.

It will be observed that, as yet, we were but upon the first step of the argument—namely, the proof that the Fathers did unanimously interpret the words—“Thou art Peter,” &c., as conveying infallibility and jurisdiction of power over the whole Church of God to Peter. Whether all, or even *one* among them all, did explicitly so say, can be easily decided by any person who considers even the passages which Romanist writers, and my opponents, adduce as the strongest.

But, now, let us suppose they did with one voice do, what not one among them did—interpret the passage, as giving these prerogatives to Peter. Yet, there is then the question—Were those prerogatives held to be transmissible? were they not personal to Peter? even allowing this passage (or any other) to speak at all of infallibility and jurisdiction.

How can it be proved that these privileges (allowing them to be contained in those words) were intended by the Lord to be transmissible to *any* line of men.

This was the second step of the proof indispensable to be made out by Roman Catholic controversialists, or the claim fails.

To this second step I applied just the same test which I had already applied to the first. You cannot use your infallibility for that interpretation; nor can you employ your own judgment. You have nothing left but the universal consent of the Fathers. Therefore, produce now extracts from their writings by which it shall unmistakably appear that they did, with one voice, declare their belief that this passage did say those privileges of infallibility and jurisdiction were *hereditary*.

I added here, I desire to direct your attention strongly to this, because I consider it to be the real strength of my argument.

The controversy was here brought to a sudden and very unexpected termination.

Mr. Gretton said—We may go on for ever at this rate. I shall take a course which you may possibly think Jesuitical. I say the passage does convey that meaning; you assert it does not. I shall assert the direct reverse of anything you maintain. How, then, can we end? I replied—This is to surrender your case as incapable of proof. It will bring the discussion at once to an end. Mr. Gretton refused to give any other answer.

I grieve to say, that the young lady on whose account I had, though an entire stranger to me, undertaken a long journey, and a very unpleasant controversy, here interposed, and said—“You have engaged in this controversy on my account, I demand, therefore, that you change your mode of proceeding. You must, I insist on it, give up your attack, and show to me some ‘better way’ than that of the Catholic Church.”

To this I answered—“That ‘better way’ is in the Church you have quitted. But I now warn you of what you are doing. You have interfered at the most essential part of my argument, as I have declared this to be. You are striving to shield your own advocates from certain defeat. Is it not utterly unreasonable of you to demand that I should, as I certainly shall not do, give up what I conceive to be the right mode of proceeding, and adopt a bad one?”

Notwithstanding this, the young lady persevered in her demand, and Mr. Gretton in his refusal.* I, therefore, said—So far as I am concerned, this controversy is ended. I am ready to defend the Church of England at the proper time; but I will not be turned aside at the crisis of our discussion to do so. If Mr. Gretton persists in his refusal, he terminates the controversy. I shall then be ready to defend the doctrines of the Church of England.

The following are briefly the objections made—

Mr. Langdon endeavoured to show the Church of England not to be a true Church, because she did not come up to the conditions of a Church in Ephesians iv.—“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” He said, Protestants, differing among themselves, had not “one faith.” That Mr. Gorham, the Bishop of Exeter, and the Archbishop of Canterbury differed about *baptismal regeneration*! therefore, the Church of England had not “one baptism.”

The answers are, of course, very plain—

As to “one faith,” he was confounding the articles of the Established Church with the opinions of individuals on subjects not determined by the articles. The faith of the Church of England was manifestly “one,” being always in accordance with that of the Church of Christ, derived solely from the Bible, concentrated in the creeds, and maintained in the four great general councils. The Church of Rome, by his *own* argument, could not be the true Church. It had not “one faith.” Its articles differ from those of the primitive Church. No early creed contained them; yet the creeds were the accredited summaries of faith. Pius IV. added new articles. The Church of Rome admitted that communion in one kind was neither the doctrine nor practice of the primitive Church. The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary was a plain novelty. The faith of the Romish Church, among all Churches, had the least title to be one.

As to “one baptism.” If Mr. Langdon can get any one to agree with him in translating *ἐν βαπτισμῷ*, “a community of view as to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration,” his argument might stand—but not till then.

Mr. Langdon read extracts from various writers against the Church of England, and in favour of Rome: among them from Mr. Macaulay, who, in a well-known passage, says—“She may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller shall take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul.”

To this I replied—Opinions of men are not to be considered as doctrines of the Church of England; that it would be easy to produce numbers of Roman Catholic writers who spoke of the corruptions of the Church of Rome; that as to Mr. Macaulay, it was easy to neutralize the passage which Mr. L. had read, by producing another from the same writer, in which he speaks of the debasing influence of the Church of Rome, as now constituted, in terms of strong condemnation. I then read the striking passage, which declares that the transition from a Roman Catholic country to a Protestant may be known from the different appearances of each; that, for the last three centuries, “to stunt the growth of the human mind has been the chief object of the Church of Rome.”

Mr. Langdon's reply to this was—That the passage I had quoted referred only to temporal things; that Protestants looked to them, and did advance in civilization! that he could not but admire the goodness of God, who had given some comforts to Protestants in this world, seeing they would have none in the world to come!

Mr. Gretton then endeavoured to convict the Church of England of a contradiction. In her catechism she said, “the body and blood of the Lord are verily and indeed taken,” &c., while in one of her articles, she denied transubstantiation.

The answer, of course, was—There is a wide difference between the words “real” and “corporal.” There is no inconsistency whatever in the doctrine of the Church of England. She denies a “corporal,” and maintains a “real” presence in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. She specifically mentions and condemns *that form*, or phase of a *corporal* presence, known as the doctrine of transubstantiation, which is the most absurd and inconceivable of all modes of “a corporal” presence.

Again Mr. Gretton sought to fix another inconsistency on the Church of England, because she allows the Church to be a witness or keeper of Holy Scripture, and yet denies her infallibility. It was not clear whether he meant this as an inconsistency, or as an error in doctrine.

In either case, the reply was plain. The assertions of the Church relate to different things. In the one article the Church of England speaks of the Church as a *witness* to the canon of Scripture, whereas, Mr. G. spoke of her infallibility as an interpreter of it. The credit of the Church at large, as a witness testifying to a matter of fact, was a very different thing from the claim of a section of that Church to infallibility as an interpreter. The Church of England did not assert the testimony to be infallible. When she denied the interpretation to be so, there was neither inconsistency nor error.

Mr. G. then spoke of the absolution services, and maintained that the Church of England held and denied the

* A gentleman present at this discussion has published, at Boulogne, an able letter upon it; he declares therein that, upon remonstrating with Mr. Gretton afterwards upon the manner in which he had brought the controversy to its abrupt conclusion, that gentleman admitted to him “it was a trick!”

doctrine of the Church of Rome. The reply is too well known to be repeated. Your readers can see from these objections how little force there is in the charge of inconsistency made against the Church of England.

I proposed to take the peculiar doctrines of the Church *seriatim*, and discuss them either in the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, or in an accredited French paper. I said I was ready to go through the controversy, if Mr. Gretton, and his friends, would accept the proposal. Written controversy would induce caution of statement. Every proposal was declined.

I have to add, that I was aware fully, ere I undertook this discussion, of its hopelessness to all human judgment; the young lady being quite satisfied of the truth of the doctrines of the Church of Rome. But no matter how hopeless to human view may be the expectation of a good result in any such like case, I trust I shall ever be ready to undertake it, when it is in my power to do so. Were another case of the same character to occur, I would do as I have done in this, and commit the result to God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness. I did, however, expect in this discussion to do what I was sure I could do, and so declared—namely, to show that it was impossible for any Roman Catholic controversialist to defend his faith without resorting to the defence of irrelevancies and subterfuges; that the true point at issue was ever evaded, and that the effort always was to hide the disingenuity of defence; and that the religion which not only required such unworthy defences, but could, moreover, blind men of natural truth and candour to so much dishonesty as to make them employ it without. I have no doubt, in many cases, feeling its criminality, could never be the religion of Christ Jesus, which, by *manifestation of truth*, commends itself to the conscience of men. Whether I have done this, the readers of your paper are, perhaps, among the best judges in the world.

I have now only to account for the undue share of space which I have made my own arguments to occupy.

I had offered—the offer was repeated by a friend—that each party should write out his own arguments, and, on mutual correction, the whole should be published. This was refused. My opponents published an account quite different from the real facts, not only without allowing me to see the MSS., but against the remonstrance of a friend, who, on learning the purpose, offered, on my part, to give every facility to a true publication.

This report of my opponents I have, and from it I have taken their arguments, so far as they have been there given. The form is condensed; the argument being merely stated.

Each man is familiar with his own mode of stating things. I had long been used to one way of conducting the argument against infallibility. I could remember my own form of statement, even to the words. I could not do the same for my opponents. Hence, in order to secure verbal fairness, I was anxious they should write out their case, and allow me to do the same for mine; this being refused, I had no option but to state my own arguments in my own way, giving those of my opponents from their condensed account, and from my own notes. Hence, the disproportionate length which I have given to myself.

I am, dear Sir,
Very truly Yours,
EDW. B. MOERAN, D.D.

Correspondence.

INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Agreeably to my promise, I now bring forward other passages from the Sacred Volume which demonstratively prove the infallibility of the Church. I affectionately call the attention of your truth-seeking and common-sense readers to those very plain and convincing passages. In our Lord's last discourse with his apostles He thus addresses them—“All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”—St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. It is plain that the apostles were not to live unto the end of the world, and, hence, their successors must be implied in the promise. It is equally plain, that if Jesus Christ be with them to the consummation of ages, they cannot fall into error against faith.

We read in St. Matthew (xviii. 17) these words—“And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.” From this, I think, it undeniably follows that a Church exists, that we are bound to hear her under pain of damnation, and that we would not be commanded to listen to her voice under such a grievous penalty, unless it were impossible for her to lead us into error, since it would be unreasonable to condemn us for not believing a seducer. The meaning which you, Mr. Editor, attach to this passage reminds me of the verse—

“By various texts we both uphold our claim—
Nay, often ground our titles on the same:
After long labour lost, and time's expense,
Both grant the words, and quarrel for the sense.”

Indeed, the verse is as applicable to all the controverted points, as well as to the one just given from St. Matthew; but the potent deciders—common sense and disinterest—ought to be allowed to put an end to the quarrel.

Infallibility of the Church is also proved—expressly and irrefragably—from the holy Apostle Paul's first Epistle to Timothy, third chapter and fifteenth verse, where he terms this unerring guide—"The Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth;" and, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he describes the tender concern of Christ for His divine spouse—"That he might present her to himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." What, Mr. Editor, can be more secure from falling into error than the very pillar of truth? What more pure and inviolate in faith than the "glorious Church" of Jesus Christ our Lord, which He has presented to Himself without wrinkle and without stain?

Again, Protestants, by denying the infallibility of the Church, leave the Holy Book without a single witness to say that it was divinely written. We believe the Scriptures, because they contain the pure word of God, and were written by divine inspiration. But, setting aside the authority of the Church, men cannot have a certain knowledge that all the books of Scripture were written in that manner. St. Augustine positively declared to the Manichees that he would not believe the Gospels themselves, unless the authority of the Church induced him to it. Now, I ask your readers, of what use would that authority be, upon which St. Augustine so confidently relied, unless it was infallible? Indeed, it would be utterly worthless.

That holy doctor advances nothing but what is evident to common sense; for no book is Scripture, because it says it is so; otherwise the Alcoran might be such. Much less is any book Scripture, because it is written in an humble, grave, serious, or majestic style; for although this dress becomes the word of God, yet it no more makes it to be so than purple makes a king, or gives him a title to the crown. Neither is a book Scripture because it contains nothing but what is true; for all true relations of things are not Scripture. How, then, is it possible for mankind to have, without a miracle, a certain assurance that such and such books (written near two thousand years ago) are Scripture, if the Church, by which they are recommended as books written by divine inspiration, be fallible?

"This is the Holy Church, the one Church, the true Church, the Catholic Church, which combats all heresies. She may fight, but she cannot be overcome. All heresies have gone out from her like useless branches lopped off from the vine, but she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. The gates of hell shall not overcome her."—St. Augustine. I will conclude with this quotation, which, I am bold to assert, is worth all the arguments you could advance on the other side.

I remain, Sir, your humble servant,

WILLIAM ROURKE.

1st March, 1855.

P.S.—I will, with your permission, accede to the request of your correspondent "A," in my next letter.—W. R.

When first Mr. Rourke favoured us with his communications, we did not think it strange that his first letter should contain a number of arguments and texts of Scripture which had been amply discussed in our pages previously; we looked upon him then as a new reader of our paper; and, for the benefit of our other new subscribers, we entered again into a full discussion of all that Mr. Rourke had to bring forward; but when he brings forward over again the same texts and arguments to which we have already replied, and that without taking the least notice of what we said, we think we have some reason to ask, how often we are expected to slay the slain? We do not see how any controversy can be brought to a conclusion unless each of the disputants condescend to take some little notice of the arguments of his opponent. We beg Mr. Rourke to refer to our answer to his very first letter (vol. ii. 121), which contained a very full examination of every text he now brings forward. Unless he can state that the interpretations we there give are erroneous, he has no right to present us with his refuted arguments.

On the present occasion we are spared the necessity of proving that Mr. Rourke has failed in his attempt to establish the infallibility of the Church by Scripture proof, since the second part of his letter is a refutation of the first. The second part of this letter is an attempt to show that we have no ground on which to rest the authority of Scripture except the infallibility of the Church. Now, how can any one prove the infallibility of the Church by Scripture proofs, if we must first believe the infallibility of the Church before we can have any certainty as to the authority of Scripture? We have, therefore, earnestly to request, that Mr. Rourke will tell us plainly, in his next letter, which line of argument he means to follow. Let him take his choice which he will prove, the infallibility of the Church by Scripture or the authority of Scripture by the infallibility of the Church. But he cannot do both; if he chooses to prove Scripture by the Church, we beg he will tell us where he finds the Church, and how he

knows it to be infallible; and if he chooses to prove the infallibility of the Church by Scripture, we ask how he can consistently maintain, that before we have found the Church we can ascertain what is Scripture, and what is the meaning of it? We shall look anxiously to Mr. Rourke's answer to this question?

THE LIVING ROSARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—In the tract called the "Living Rosary," published by James Duffy, 10, Wellington-quay, Dublin, 1846, he states, that it commenced in the city of Lyons, in the year 1826, and that "his holiness, Gregory XVI., was graciously pleased to give it his solemn sanction and approbation, and issue a brief in confirmation of it."

The publisher gives the brief *extenso*, in which the Holy Father "grants to all the faithful in Christ, of both sexes, who are enrolled amongst the servants of the Virgin, according to the practice of the devotion which they call the living rosary, a plenary indulgence." And then the Pope adds—"But endeavouring on this, that the minds of all may be influenced with a more intense desire of respect, love, and devotion towards the Virgin Mary, and whilst we, therefore, seek to furnish incentives to those even who are already running on, by proposing a most abundant reward of indulgences, we, at the same time, most earnestly urge this, that all diligently discharging also the other duties of religion, charity, and the virtues, and their morals being made conformable to the rules of Christian profession, they would present themselves more dear to the most holy mother, who promises that they shall possess eternal life, who shall have endeavoured to make her honoured."

May I beg to call the attention of your Roman Catholic correspondents to the last clause above. Perhaps some of them would, through the LAYMAN, kindly inform your readers, at what time did the most holy mother make the above promise? and to whom did she first reveal it?

It would also be desirable to know, has the power of promising eternal life, which the Pope ascribes to the Virgin, been made a dogma of faith? if so, by what councils, and when? I am, Sir, faithfully yours, W. M.

WHAT IS A GHOST?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

YOUR HONOR—I once wrote a letter that you printed,* and I'm going to write another, for I'm puzzled entirely with a story I read in the last CATHOLIC LAYMAN. Your honor took it out of a book written by one of the saints, but I can't neither call his name nor spell it. I can spell any of the blessed apostles, thank God; but it's a poor thing that I can neither call nor spell the saints; for how will I pray to them if I can't spell their names? But sure your honor will know the man I mean, and that will do. [It must be St. Alphonsus Liguori—see our last number, p. 29.—Editor.] Well, your honor, I'm bothered a good deal with ghosts, for I've got a farm now, and there's an old church-yard at the back of the byre, and when the girls goes out to milk there's all kinds of work, and when the boys goes to mind the cattle at night it's as bad; and whatever the boys and girls does, there's still a ghost in the church-yard to lay the blame on. Well, your honor, it wouldn't do at all, for the business wasn't done, with their tricks; so I set about thinking, and, says I, the ghosts isn't it; for them that's buried, says I, their bodies is in under the ground, and their souls is either in purgatory—if there be such a place—or else their souls is either in heaven or hell, and then how can the dead people be a-skerreting about the church-yard of a night, says I; so I'll have no more of it, says I, but I'll see the business done in byre and barn. Well, with sticking to that I got things mighty quiet, and there was no more bother with the ghosts. But, now, if the saint's story is true, I am wrong entirely, and I'm in dread the ghosts will be as bad as ever; for, your honor sees, what done the job was this—that their bodies was under the earth, and their souls was in their own proper places, wherever that be; so the dead people couldn't be there, stopping the business; for, look at the saint's story about them two young reprobates that went to the bad house; and one of them goes home to bed; then the other comes to him, and what does he say? Why, he says, "my body is lying dead in the street," says he, "and my soul is away in hell," says he; "and here I am myself," says he. Now, your honor, who was he, or what was he at all? He wasn't his body, for that was in the street; he wasn't his soul, for that was in hell; and is there anything else in a man to make himself? so who was he at all? Now, your honor, I'm thinking may be he was about as humbugging a ghost as them that the boys and girls makes in the church-yard, just to cover their own tricks; and I don't want your honor to be setting up the boys and girls again with their ghosts, and telling them the saints is for it, when I go through the church-yard myself every night of my life, and never seen anything in it worse than myself. So I hope your honor will consider it, and tell how he couldn't be there, when his body wasn't in it, nor his soul neither, by his own story.

Your humble servant to command,

PAT MURRAY, of Westmeath.

* CATHOLIC LAYMAN, October, 1852.

We think there is much sense in our correspondent's ideas about ghosts. A man is composed of two parts—one is his body, the other his soul or spirit. The word "ghost" means nothing else but the soul or spirit of a man. It is all nonsense to talk about a man's "ghost" being where his body is not, and where his soul is not. But our correspondent need not be uneasy about the story we told out of the "Glories of Mary," by Alphonsus Liguori, for in the first page of Liguori's book we find the following:—

"PROTESTATION.

"In obedience to the decrees of (Pope) Urban VIII., I protest that of the *miraculous deeds* and gifts ascribed in this work to certain servants of God, and not already approved by the Holy See, I claim no other belief than what is ordinarily given to history resting on mere human authority."

Now, if the writer of the book himself finds reason to protest that he does not think his own stories any more entitled to belief than the stories of ghosts which our friend Pat Murray has heard on the mere human authority of his boys and girls, we do not see why any one else should put any more faith in them. It does seem strange that "saints" who may have the Word of God, that cannot lie, should choose rather to support their moral lessons with lying stories, which they themselves do not firmly believe; but since such is the case, our friend Pat Murray will do well to disregard such stories, and follow his own sensible plan of making the boys and girls do their business, and never allowing them to see anything worse than themselves. Let him stick to that and he won't be far out.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Can you, or any of your correspondents, inform me—1st, When the Church of Rome first omitted God's commandment against image worship, from the Decalogue? and 2nd, When the Bishop of Rome first claimed universal obedience as Jesus Christ's Vicar, as being necessary to salvation?

Yours, &c.,

G. F.

There is some little difficulty in replying to the first of our correspondent's questions, owing to the form in which it is put. The Church of Rome only holds herself responsible for those formularies which she has expressly authorized; and our correspondent will find the Second Commandment given in full in the Catechism of the Council of Trent. Nevertheless, it is certainly true that this commandment is omitted from a great number of the popular Roman Catholic Catechisms which are in common use, both in this and other countries. We do not know at what particular time this omission began to be practised, as most of the works to which we refer are of a very ephemeral kind, and are frequently varied from time to time.

We believe that the first Bishop of Rome who claimed universal obedience to himself, as being necessary to salvation, was Boniface VIII., who occupied the Papal chair at the end of the 13th century. An extract from his famous Bull, entitled "Unam Sanctam," in which this claim is made, will be found by our correspondent in the CATHOLIC LAYMAN for March of the present year (p. 30).

Perhaps some of our other correspondents may be able to afford "G. F." fuller information on the points to which his letter refers.

FARMING OPERATIONS FOR APRIL.

[From the Irish Farmers' Gazette.]

April Wheat may be sown about the 10th of the month. It appears from the discussion lately in the GAZETTE, that this species does not do so well when sown much earlier; but that if sown any time about the middle of the month it is a most profitable crop, yielding well and fetching a fair price, and that it is a most excellent crop to sow small seeds with.

Potato planting should be proceeded with and finished without delay, as much sprouting reduces the strength of the set considerably; in fact, the potato should be planted before the eyes shoot out at all.

Oats.—Sowing should now be finished without delay, on poor, cold soils; or if late sown, an increase in the quantity of seed is desirable, in order to prevent tillering, and uneven ripening.

Parsnips may still be sown; but, as it is getting late, we would recommend germinating as directed last month, by which a good crop may be secured, even if sown in the last week of the month.

Carrots may be sown up to the middle of the month, but we would recommend germinating the seed also.

Peas and Beans, of early varieties, may still be sown. Steep the seed in water for twenty-four hours, then sow, and cover up lightly. See directions for the two former months.

Spring Vetches.—Sow another breadth, mixed with oats.

Fallows, where still practised, should now get a good harrowing or grubbing, and be again ploughed up.

Paring and Burning should be proceeded with vigorously, as weather serves.